**Indo-Bangladesh relations**

†938. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that relations with Bangladesh are not congenial;

(b) if so, wheher Government have taken any steps, so far, to improve relations with Bangladesh; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir. India & Bangladesh enjoy good neighbourly relations.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

**Expenditure on rent abroad**

939. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news report captioned "8% of MEA Budget spent on rents abroad" which appeared in the 'Asian Age' dated the 20th May, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to address the problems highlighted in the report?

THE MINISTER OF SATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following details of the total expenditure of the Ministry *vis-a-vis* the expenditure incurred on rents during the last three years indicate that actually the rentals abroad from about 6% of the total annual expenditure of the Ministry:—

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

| Year | Total expenditure of the Ministry *Rs.(in crores)* | Expenditure on rents *Rs. (in crores)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1998-99 | 2073.76 | 130.53 |
| 1999-00 | 2133.16 | 139.66 |
| 2000-01 | 2488.85 | 142.16 |

The rentals are generally paid in hard currencies, which appreciate from time to time, thereby inflating the Rupee equivalent of the rental. The Ministry has adopted measure to keep the rental liabilities abroad at the minimum.

(c) The Ministry has constructed its own buildings in various countries after acquisition of plots of land. Also a number of built-up properties have been purchased. Presently, the Ministry is formulating plans for construction of Embassy Complexes in several countries and is also in the process of implementing proposals for purchase of built-up properties. These measures will gradually further reduce our rental liabilities abroad.

**Verification of claims on Cross-Border terrorism by USA**

940. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the USA has agreed to verify claims on cross-border terrorism;

(b) if so, the method adopted by U.S.;

(c) whether Government had already given them the list of areas where cross-border terrorism is taking place; and

(d) if so, whether USA has satisfied and has agreed to check the reports given by India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) it is for the United States to independently assess the implementation of the pledge given to it by President Musharraf on an immediate, visible and permanent end to cross-border infiltration and decide on its method and sources for making that assessment.